

VELLODROME MARKET: STRUGGLE OVER THE YEARS

Street vending is an important source of self-employment for the poor in India. The number of street vendors in Delhi is estimated at about 6, 00, 000 and they contribute largely to the city's economy, simultaneously catering to the needs of the people. Although the central government adopted the National Policy on Street Vendors in January 2004, so far no city has implemented it effectively. According to municipal laws it is illegal to vend without a license issued at the sole discretion of the municipalities. Yet, the municipalities in India have stopped issuing licenses to street vendors' decades ago, consequently trapping more than one crore vendors of India in a web of illegality and making them an easy target of extortion rackets.

Since the time of its inception, SEWA has played a significant role in influencing policy level decisions. The National Policy for urban street vendors was the outcome of initiative taken by SEWA's founder Smt. Elaben Bhatt.

2004

SEWA Delhi has tremendously contributed to the formulation of Urban Street Vendors Scheme in Delhi. It was due to SEWA's efforts that a Task Force was set-up by the government of India to formulate a National Policy on street vendors. SEWA was also a member of the Task Force and a member of the Drafting Committee of the national policy which tirelessly struggled to make ensure street vendors be given their rights. Efforts fructified in the form of "National Policy On Urban Street Vendors, 2004" published by Department of Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation, Ministry of Urban Development & Poverty Alleviation, Government of India.

2005

Though the "National Policy on Urban Street Vendors, 2004" came into being, the implementation of the policy was not too effective and SEWA Delhi, once again, set about to strive for an inclusive and effective policy in place.

2006

In the year 2006, SEWA intervened in the Gainda Ram case before the Supreme Court where Supreme Court directed the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) to draft schemes keeping in mind the National Policy of Street Vendors 2004. Subsequently, NDMC and MCD drafted a detailed scheme pertaining to the rights of the Street Vendors which was approved by the Hon'ble Court with slight modification.

2007

Resultant of the scheme framed by the MCD and NDMC on direction of the Supreme Court dated March 2006 and May 2006 was inviting applications. 1, 65, 000 pink slip forms filled out. Simultaneously, SEWA Delhi liaised with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi for demarcating space for vendors and issuance of licenses. To resolve our concerns, a high powered committee under the MCD Commissioner was formed but in vain. Through the constant struggles, 13, 000 vendors received licenses.

2008

Ahead of the Commonwealth Games, a beautification drive was launched where street vendors, aligned with SEWA Delhi, of Qutub Road and Velloidrome Road were displaced. This led to banishment of their livelihood with no respite in sight.

2009

SEWA Delhi, hereafter began a long-drawn struggle with Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). During 2009, a model act for the welfare of street vendors was formed.

2010

2010 proved to be a fruitful year as SEWA Delhi won the case pertaining to the markets of Qutub Road and Velloidrome being displaced. Following this, SEWA Delhi began a dialogue with the officials of the Government of India for the relocation of Velloidrome Road Market. Soon after, SEWA Delhi began discussions with the Public Works Department (PWD) where street vendors (Velloidrome Road) were allocated designated space.